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ENE-MATES --- A Public Information Program For Women

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1. Preface

In 1966 the first nuclear power plant started commercial operation in Japan. Since then the development of nuclear power has made great progress. Now nuclear power contributes to 10 percent of the primary energy supply and nearly 30 percent of total electricity supply in Japan.

Japan depends on import for more than 80 percent of its total energy supply. Nuclear energy is one of the most promising alternatives to oil. It plays a significant role for energy supply in terms of reliability, economic viability and reduction of CO2 emissions.

In order to secure needed capacity, the Government concentrates its efforts on acquiring public acceptance of nuclear power as well as ensuring the safety of plants and improving plant capability and reliability.

An opinion poll, done by the Japanese Government in Sep. of 1990, showed that 73.3 percent of males and 57.4 percent of females think that nuclear power is necessary to a secure energy supply.

In order to obtain public acceptance of nuclear power generation, it is indispensable to respond to people's inquiries, providing them with correct information about it.

2. PA Activities of NUPEC

Nuclear Power Engineering Corporation (NUPEC) employs various methods for information services and, in particular, electric power generation including nuclear with an assignment from the Japanese Government.

Public information activities by the Nuclear Power Engineering Corporation (NUPEC) are as follows.

- a) Telephone Q & A service to respond to public inquiries
- b) Publishing the "Nuclear Newsletter" monthly and various brochures
- c) Information service by personal computer network Atomnet concerning

energy in general, and operation/trouble informations of nuclear plants

- d) Distribution and service of personal computers (named "ENEPYUTA" with game software) to local governments offices/museums, etc., for users ranging from children to adults to gather nuclear associated information
- e) Organization of female monitors "ENE-MATES" to have lecture meetings and site tours

3. ENE-MATES---A Public Information Program For Women

As a 1990 opinion poll shows, women's feelings about nuclear energy differ from that of men. Women are more sensitive and anxious than men on nuclear energy issues. To improve this situation several programs for women have been planned and implemented. "ENE-MATES" program is one of these cases.

Purpose : To encourage women, centering around house wives, to have unbiased understanding of energy-related issues.

Target : General women

Term : 1 year (fiscal year)

Contents: To organize ENE-MATES, a women's group is chosen from those interested in energy issues who were publicly invited to a nationwide screening. They are offered various occasions for considering energy issues with them such as site tours, lecture meetings, panel discussions and roundtable discussions.

Activities in 1993 F/Y

Applicants : 2334

Selected members : 400

Age structure

20--29	13.5 %	30--39	28.8 %
40--49	29.8 %	50--59	19.3 %
60--69	8.3 %	70--	0.3 %

More than 90 % of members have some experience in activities such as Consumer Life Monitors, executives of PTA.

Out line of activities :

- 1) Meetings and site tours (% of attendance)
 - a) 1st meeting -- Orientation and lectures, held

- at 2 places (east and west Japan)
: half a day on weekday 75 %
- b) Site tours including lecture meetings, discussions
-- Divided into 6 areas (total 11 times), one nuclear power station and two other energy facilities, such as thermal power, geothermal power, pumped storage power, solar energy and so on
: 2-day tour on weekday 59 %
- c) Last meeting--Lectures and panel discussions, held at 2 places (east and west Japan)
: one day on weekday 53 %
- 2) Distribution of public information materials
- a) "Ene-mate Club", a bulletin on the ENE-MATES, which was published three times in FY 1993, introduces activities such as lecture meetings and site tours, opinions, and impressions of the ENE-MATES as well as descriptive articles to promote essential knowledge of energy
- b) "Nuclear Power Generation--Its Necessity and Safety", "Newsletter on Nuclear Energy" and other information materials
- 3) Test of the product--Questionnaires to ENE-MATES
- 1st survey--before 1st meeting
2nd survey--after last meeting
- a) On necessity of nuclear power generation
- | | (1st survey) | (2nd survey) |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Necessary | 71.9 % | 81.2 % |
| Unnecessary | 13.9 % | 6.8 % |
| No clear opinion | 14.2 % | 12.0 % |
- b) On safety of nuclear power generation
- | | (1st survey) | (2nd survey) |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Safe | 34.9 % | 63.9 % |
| Unsafe | 36.4 % | 18.2 % |
| No clear opinion | 28.7 % | 17.9 % |

4. Conclusion

ENE-MATES activities are very effective to promote better understanding on safety of nuclear power generation.

Many ENE-MATES want to utilize their experience and knowledge which were obtained during their activities. Therefore, it is useful to prepare and supply various information materials (video tapes, pamphlets etc.).

To extend the circle of ENE-MATES, implementation of former members' activities is a matter of importance. In this year a new attempt for former members has been made. The program consists of an intensive lecture meeting with site tour to the radioactive waste disposal facility.

In general, a face-to-face communication program like ENE-MATES is very effective and worth to continuing.